

## USACHPPM

# HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE

16 April 2004

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

<b>HOT TOPICS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Avoid Logs to Avoid Ticks, Experts Say.....	2
Concussion Causes Emotional Disturbances .....	2
Targeting Two Heart Ailments .....	2
Ultrasound Treatment Doesn't Promote Healing: Study.....	3
Vitamin C Reduces Level of Disease Biomarker .....	3
<b>FOCUS ON EPIDEMIOLOGY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Update: West Nile Virus Screening of Blood Donations and Transfusion-Associated Transmission --- United States, 2003 .....	3
DoD-GEIS Update: Influenza.....	4
<b>USEUCOM .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Mysterious Cattle Disease Breaks Out in Zambia .....	4
North West Receives More Help with Cholera.....	4
Polio from Nigeria Spreads Further Afield to Botswana .....	5
Race against Rains for Refugees on Chad Border .....	5
Somalia: Cholera on the Rise in Mogadishu .....	5
South Africa: DDT used for Malaria Control .....	5
Toxic Gas Poisoning: Bulgaria .....	6
Zimbabwe: Resurgence of TB Causes Concern .....	6
<b>USCENTCOM .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Iraq: Aid Agencies Concerned over Medical Supplies to Fallujah .....	6
JHU Awarded \$3.9 Million to Assess Afghan Health System.....	7
<b>USNORTHCOM .....</b>	<b>7</b>
America Faces an Epidemic of Vision-Loss Problems .....	7
CDC: Passengers on Four Seattle, San Francisco Flights May Have Been Exposed to Measles.....	7
EPA Misled 9/11 Crisis Responders on Health Dangers .....	7
Ephedra Sales Banned in United States.....	8
FDA OKs Trial of Thought-Activated Brain Implant.....	8
FDA Warns against Eight Supplements.....	8
First Bloodless HIV Test Approved in US .....	8
Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome: Montana.....	9
Leptospirosis Blamed in Student's Death .....	9
Missed Alcohol Diagnoses in Hospital Patients .....	9
Ohio Has First 2004 U.S. West Nile Case -Report.....	9
Returning GIs Tested for Uranium Exposure .....	10
Study: Many Can't Read the Label .....	10
Updated Primer on Foodborne Illness Released.....	10

U.S. Passenger Jets Must Carry Defibrillators.....	10
<b>USPACOM .....</b>	<b>11</b>
AIDS Out Of Control in India.....	11
China Offers Free AIDS Tests, Treatment.....	11
Indonesia's Dengue Outbreak 'Far from Over'.....	11
Shanghai backs off from one-child policy .....	12
Thailand Delays Declaring Victory over Bird Flu .....	12
<b>USSOUTHCOM.....</b>	<b>12</b>
Hospitals Provide No Refuge from Armed Attacks in Haiti .....	12
Sylvan Yellow Fever: Brazil.....	12

## HOT TOPICS

### Avoid Logs to Avoid Ticks, Experts Say

8 April - Reuters reported that to avoid ticks you should avoid sitting on logs, experts advised. Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, used themselves as bait to see where the greatest risk of picking up a tick was, and found logs were the worst places to sit. "We sat on logs for only five minutes at a time, and in 30 percent of the cases, it resulted in exposure to ticks," said Robert Lane, a professor of insect biology who led the study. "The next riskiest behavior was gathering wood, followed by sitting against trees, which resulted in tick exposure 23 percent and 17 percent of the time, respectively," Lane said. "If we're going to develop effective strategies and educational programs for the prevention of [Lyme disease](#), it is critical that we understand how people are exposed to the ticks that transmit the bacteria in the first place," Lane stated. [View Article](#)

### Concussion Causes Emotional Disturbances

13 April – Eurekalert reported that researchers have documented negative mood disturbances such as depression and confusion resulting from sports concussions. The study used injured athletes to chart the course of emotional recovery after a concussion. The researchers found that concussed athletes were not emotionally different from their peers before injury, but were more depressed and confused than their uninjured teammates after sustaining a concussion. Three groups were used in the study - concussed athletes, uninjured teammates of the concussed athletes, and healthy, physically active undergraduate students. Baseline mood state for athletes was measured during a pre-season medical and neurological assessment. Those athletes who suffered a concussion during the season were then repeatedly reassessed in the weeks after injury. The study found that the depression, confusion and total mood disturbance that resulted from the concussion disappeared within three weeks. Depression resolved in approximately seven days while confusion and total mood disturbance took 17 to 21 days. Concussions, or mild traumatic brain injuries (MTBI), are a result of an alteration of consciousness that does not necessarily cause someone to lose consciousness. Physical symptoms of concussion include blurred vision, headache, dizziness and loss of coordination. [View Article](#)

### Targeting Two Heart Ailments

09 April - Newsday.com reported that the molecular underpinnings of two deadly forms of heart disease have been discovered by scientists at Columbia University Medical Center who have also developed a drug to treat them, discoveries that ultimately may save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Known as JTV519, the drug promises to strengthen the heart and regulate its beats. It is designed to treat patients with heart failure and a genetic disorder that causes the heart to suddenly stop. Heart failure is marked by cardiac enlargement and progressive weakening of the organ. It affects 5 million in the United States. About half also have extremely irregular heartbeats. The experimental drug, so far has proved successful in mice and in a small pilot trial of heart failure patients. It is expected to go into full clinical testing next year. The drug effectively plugs a leak in a vital calcium channel that governs heartbeat and this improves function in heart failure patients. [View Article](#)

## Ultrasound Treatment Doesn't Promote Healing: Study

13 April – Science Blog reported although ultrasound is one of the most frequently prescribed treatments for one of the most common sport and athletic injuries – skeletal muscle contusions – there's really no good scientific evidence showing that it treats injured muscles effectively, said Steven Devor, the study's lead author and an assistant professor of sport and exercise sciences at Ohio State University. Devor and his colleagues used ultrasound to treat contusion injuries inflicted on rats' gastrocnemius muscles. Ultrasound treatment didn't hasten healing at all, even when compared to injured muscles that weren't treated with ultrasound. The study appears in a recent issue of the International Journal of Sports Medicine. [View Article](#)

## Vitamin C Reduces Level of Disease Biomarker

12 April 2004 – UC Berkeley News reported that Vitamin C supplements can reduce levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation and chronic disease risk in humans. Participants who took about 500 milligrams of vitamin C supplements per day saw a 24 percent drop in plasma C-reactive protein (CRP) levels after two months. Inflammation occurs as part of the body's defense against infection or injury. The body triggers the production of inflammatory cytokines, such as interleukin-6, that then set off the production of CRP by the liver. The researchers say that long-term adverse health effects occur when inflammation persists at low levels. This chronic inflammation, with persistent low levels of CRP, has been found among smokers and Type 2 diabetics, as well as among overweight or obese persons. They say that scientists have only recently begun to understand such chronic inflammation as an important factor in disease. [View Article](#)

# FOCUS ON EPIDEMIOLOGY

## Update: West Nile Virus Screening of Blood Donations and Transfusion-Associated Transmission --- United States, 2003

9 April – CDC/MMWR reported that in 2002, transfusion-associated transmission (TAT) of [West Nile virus](#) (WNV) infection acquired through blood transfusion marked the emergence of a new threat to the U.S. blood supply. Although mosquito-borne transmission remains the predominant mode of WNV transmission, identification of TAT underscored the need for WNV screening of donated blood. In June 2003, blood-collection agencies implemented investigational WNV nucleic acid--amplification tests to screen all blood donations and identify potentially infectious donations for quarantine and retrieval. This screening was performed on approximately 6 million units during June--December 2003, resulting in the removal of at least 818 viremic blood donations from the blood supply. The report summarizes the results of blood-donation screening tests conducted during 2003 and describes six cases of WNV TAT that occurred because of transfusion of components containing low levels of

virus not detected by the testing algorithm. These data indicate that blood screening for WNV has improved blood safety. However, a small risk of WNV transfusion-associated transmission remains. To address this risk, changes to screening strategies are planned for 2004. [View Full Report](#)

## DoD-GEIS Update: Influenza

14 April - The [influenza](#) season began in October 2003, earlier than usual, and peaked during late November to December then declined rapidly in January and February 2004. This underscores the need to begin influenza vaccination programs promptly as vaccine becomes available. Influenza A (H3N2) viruses predominated, with influenza B viruses isolated sporadically. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports based on preliminary data that the current season was more severe than the previous three seasons but within the range expected for a typical A (H3N2) season. Influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported early and gained attention this season; as of 27 March, 142 influenza-associated deaths in U.S. residents aged <18 years were reported. The number of new deaths declined as influenza activity decreased, with 5 new deaths since January 26. Efforts are under way to track national pediatric influenza-associated deaths annually. Vaccine efficacy, lower than usual due to the predominance of Fujian A (H3N2) strain, was estimated to be from 35-60%. For avian influenza(AI), the CDC has summarized the current situation as follows. Since early February 2004 AI outbreaks in poultry have been reported from multiple locations in North America (British Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas). Most outbreaks involved A (H7N2) or A (H7N3) strains with low pathogenicity; Texas reported an outbreak of highly pathogenic A (H5N2) among poultry limited to one farm that was quarantined, depopulated, cleaned, and disinfected. Although no confirmed cases of human infection have been reported in the US, Canada reported two laboratory-confirmed cases of human A (H7) infection in British Columbia associated with a localized poultry A (H7N3) outbreak. AI viruses isolated from the North American poultry outbreaks in 2004 are unrelated to the A (H5N1) epizootic in Southeast Asia. Influenza A (H7) viruses cause outbreaks among poultry, but do not typically infect humans, however in a 2002 Virginia outbreak of A (H7N2) when 4.7 million turkeys and chickens were destroyed one culler had upper respiratory symptoms and antibodies to A (H7N2). In 2003 in the Netherlands poultry outbreaks of A (H7N7) a total of 89 persons had confirmed A (H7N7) infection with 83 cases of conjunctivitis, 7 cases of ILI, and one death. Since then no human H7N7 cases have been reported in the US. View [CDC interim recommendations](#). More information about these and other disease topics can be found at <http://www.geis.ha.osd.mil>.

## USEUCOM

### Mysterious Cattle Disease Breaks Out in Zambia

13 April – People’s Daily reported that a mysterious and deadly cattle disease has broken out in Gwembe district in southern Zambia. Philip Mweehe, an official in Gwembe district, was quoted as saying animals were dying within 24 hours after contracting the disease whose symptoms include diarrhea, adding that the animals were also found with lumps when they were skinned. He urged veterinary officers to rush to the area and investigate the nature of the disease before the cattle population was wiped out. [View Article](#)

### North West Receives More Help with Cholera

13 April – allAfrica.com reported that an epidemiologist has arrived in Kanana, North West, South Africa to help find the source of the cholera that has infected at least 109 people in the area over the

past three weeks. To date, 29 people are still in hospital receiving treatment for the water-borne disease. The provincial health department once again urged communities to continue purifying water before use, ensure that there is proper sanitation disposal of human waste without contaminating water sources and control of flies. [View Source](#)

## Polio from Nigeria Spreads Further Afield to Botswana

14 April – The United Nations (UN) News Service reported that the United Nations health agency today reported the first case in 13 years of [polio](#) in the southern African country of Botswana. This underlines the spreading risk to polio-free areas of imported infection from northern Nigeria where immunization was suspended last year. The magnitude of the risk posed to polio-free areas is compounded by the growing vulnerability of populations to polio globally after the cessation of preventive polio immunization campaigns in most polio-free countries in 2002 to 2003, it added. In the past 18 months new cases genetically linked to the poliovirus endemic to northern Nigeria have occurred in the previously polio-free west and central African countries of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Togo. The government, the World Health Organization (WHO), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partners are currently preparing an emergency response, including heightened disease surveillance and a nationwide immunization campaign to ensure that any transmission is stopped rapidly. [View Article](#)

## Race against Rains for Refugees on Chad Border

11 April – Reuters reported thousands of refugees from Sudan risk being stranded on the border with Chad and exposed to attacks by militiamen unless they can be ferried to camps before the rainy season starts, aid workers say. The UN says 110,000 men, women and children have fled to Chad from Sudan's Darfur region, where Khartoum has used aerial bombardment to smash a rebel revolt and a proxy force of armed, horse-riding Arab militia raids farming communities at dawn. Aid agencies have set up camps in this remote, impoverished corner of Africa to provide medical care and food in what officials call one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. [View Article](#)

## Somalia: Cholera on the Rise in Mogadishu

14 April – The UN Integrated Regional Information Networks reported that the number of suspected [cholera](#) cases has increased in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, since the beginning of April, according to a WHO medical officer. Between 3 April and 9 April, 489 diarrheal cases had been diagnosed in three of the city's hospitals, of whom nine patients had died. Since mid-December, 2,042 cases of suspected cholera had been reported to WHO, including 23 deaths. Between 27 March and 2 April, 173 suspected cases were recorded, up from between 40 and 50 in the previous two weeks. The cholera season has begun in Somalia, resulting from the hot weather coupled with increased rains and water consumption. Cholera is caused by a bacterium commonly found in food or water which infects people's intestines, causing diarrhea, vomiting, leg cramps and dehydration. If an infected person is given medication and fluids immediately after the first symptoms show up, the disease can be completely cured, but otherwise death can occur within hours. [View Article](#)

## South Africa: DDT used for Malaria Control

11 April – The New York Times reported as [malaria](#) surges once again in Africa, victories are few. But South Africa is beating the disease with a simple remedy: spraying the inside walls of houses in affected regions once a year. Several insecticides can be used, but South Africa has chosen the most effective one: DDT. It lasts twice as long as the alternatives. It repels mosquitoes in addition to killing them, which delays the onset of pesticide-resistance. It costs a quarter as much as the next cheapest

insecticide. KwaZulu-Natal, a province of South Africa, sprayed with DDT until 1996, then stopped, in part under pressure from other nations, and switched to another insecticide. But mosquitoes proved to be resistant to the new insecticide, and malaria cases soared. Since DDT was brought back in 2000, malaria is once again under control. To South Africans, DDT is their best defense against a killer disease. Yet DDT, the very insecticide that eradicated malaria in developed nations, has been essentially deactivated as a malaria-control tool today. The paradox is that sprayed in tiny quantities inside houses -- the only way anyone proposes to use it today -- DDT is most likely not harmful to people or the environment. Certainly, the possible harm from DDT is vastly outweighed by its ability to save children's lives. [View Article](#)

## Toxic Gas Poisoning: Bulgaria

11 April – ProMED reported at least 40 people have been hurt, some seriously, in a poison gas attack in the Bulgarian capital. A bomb containing a toxic chloride gas was thrown into a visitors' area in a Sofia traffic police office, the Interior Ministry said. At least one person was said to be in life-threatening condition and four others were critically ill. Police said a suspect was held two hours after the attack, but there was no word on possible motive. The health ministry identified the chemical as chloropicrin, a pesticide that has also been used in the past as a military-grade tear gas. It can be extremely dangerous when inhaled in large quantities. Inhaling significant quantities of chloropicrin damages the respiratory system, and can cause vomiting, the lungs to fill with fluid, and eventually death. In smaller quantities it causes skin and eye irritation. It is used mainly as a pesticide and to combat fungi in soil, but can also be used in treating timber. It was used in chemical weapons in World War I by both Germany and the Allies. [View Article](#)

## Zimbabwe: Resurgence of TB Causes Concern

09 April – IRIN News reported malnutrition due to the ongoing food crisis, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and overcrowded urban areas are all contributing to a rise in [tuberculosis](#) (TB) infections in Zimbabwe. Nicholas Siziba, the national coordinator of the Ministry of Health's special TB program, sounded the alarm last week while visiting Matabeleland South province - one of the worst-affected areas. He said the annual number of infections for the province had risen to 3,000, up from slightly over 2,000 in previous years. [View Article](#)

# USCENTCOM

## Iraq: Aid Agencies Concerned over Medical Supplies to Fallujah

09 April – IRIN News reported aid agencies have expressed deep concern over medical help available to the injured following an escalation in violence in Iraq, particularly in the city of Fallujah. "There is only one hospital in Fallujah and up until yesterday it was not accessible and there were a great number of casualties, but we don't know what the situation is now," a spokeswoman for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Nada Doumani, told IRIN from Amman. Fighting between Coalition forces and armed groups opposed to them has led to the deaths of dozens of civilians in cities including Baghdad, Fallujah and Ramadi, northwest of the capital and Amara, Karbala, Kut and Nasiriyah in the south. According to reports, at least 200 Iraqis and over 30 Coalition soldiers have been killed. Dozens of those killed appear to have been civilians. [View Article](#)

## JHU Awarded \$3.9 Million to Assess Afghan Health System

11 April - Eurekalert reported that The Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health was awarded \$3.9 million from the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan to set up a national evaluation system to monitor and assess the nation's health care system. In addition, the Hopkins researchers will assist the Afghan government in developing a health care finance system to sustain health services in the future. The three-year grant, which begins this month, is part of \$60 million in development aid provided to Afghanistan by the World Bank. Currently several non-governmental organizations provide health services under performance-based contracts to 13 of Afghanistan's 32 provinces. The evaluation system will independently measure the progress of these organizations and the Afghan Ministry of Health to make sure they are providing adequate health services. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### America Faces an Epidemic of Vision-Loss Problems

13 April – HealthDay reported that an estimated 28 million people over age 40 have eye ailments that leave them at risk for vision loss and blindness. And those numbers will spike up as the population ages. Cataracts affect an estimated 20.5 million U.S. adults, and that number is expected rise to 30.1 million in the next 20 years. Other leading causes of vision loss include macular degeneration, glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy. All are strongly linked with aging. The figures provide the most accurate estimates yet on the prevalence of major causes of vision loss in the United States. [View Article](#)

### CDC: Passengers on Four Seattle, San Francisco Flights May Have Been Exposed to Measles

11 April – ABC News reported passengers on four flights from Hong Kong to San Francisco and Seattle late last month may have been exposed to toddlers from China who carried the [measles](#) virus, federal officials have warned. Anyone on those flights who develops fever or rash on or before April 16 should be evaluated by a doctor, the CDC said. Health officials determined Friday that three children in Washington and one in Maryland who were adopted from China had been confirmed as having measles, the CDC said. Three of the children likely were infectious during their March 26 flights, the CDC said. The warning applies to United Airlines Flight 862 and Cathay Pacific Flight CX872, both from Hong Kong to San Francisco; and United Airlines Flight 476 and United Airlines Flight 784, both from San Francisco to Seattle. [View Article](#)

### EPA Misled 9/11 Crisis Responders on Health Dangers

07 April – Oneworld.net News reported the poisonous gas and dust unleashed by the September 11 disaster continue to settle in the lungs of thousands of recovery workers and New York City residents. They are particularly exasperated with the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), because it quickly reassured people that the air around the World Trade Centre site in New York's Manhattan was safe to breathe, when in fact EPA scientists lacked sufficient data to draw this conclusion. In the months following the collapse of the center, the EPA helped clean some 4,000 apartments in the area through a voluntary program. However, tens of thousands of other sites, including offices and schools, have never been officially checked for toxins like asbestos, mercury and lead. "The question remains that thousands of homes could still be contaminated," said Dr. Paul Liroy, one of the lead authors of a

study released in February by the National Institutes of Health on the environmental and health impacts of the 9/11 attacks. [View Article](#)

## Ephedra Sales Banned in United States

12 April – HealthDay reported that sales of the herbal stimulant ephedra became illegal in the United States today. The ban took effect after a federal judge refused to grant a temporary restraining order sought by two manufacturers that would have blocked the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from outlawing products containing the substance. The FDA announced the ban in December and urged consumers to stay away from ephedra, which the agency said was linked to 155 deaths and numerous heart attacks and strokes. The FDA has a higher standard to meet for supplements than it has for drugs. Drugs must be shown to be safe and effective before they are approved, while the government must show that supplements are dangerous before they can be removed from the market. [View Article](#)

## FDA OKs Trial of Thought-Activated Brain Implant

14 April – Health Day reported that the FDA has approved trials of a new brain implant that sounds like the basis of a science fiction movie. Massachusetts-based Cyberkinetics Inc. has won FDA permission to begin implanting small chips into the skulls of paralyzed patients, which could allow users to command a computer to act -- just by thinking about the instructions they wish to send, according to the *Associated Press (AP)*. This early example of thought-activated technology could ultimately bolster the quality of life for victims of stroke or paralyzing diseases like cerebral palsy or Lou Gehrig's disease, the wire service reported. Cyberkinetics, which is far from the only company working on such technology, told the *AP* it hopes to bring a product to market in three to five years. [View Source](#)

## FDA Warns against Eight Supplements

09 April – MSNBC News reported the government is warning consumers not to use a list of liquid products touted as providing a “safe legal high” because they actually may contain some risky chemicals — including a date-rape drug. On the warning list: Trip2Night, Invigorate II, Snuffadelic, Liquid Speed, Solar Water, Orange Butterfly, Schoomz and Green Hornet Liquid. The FDA first warned against Green Hornet in February, after four Colorado teenagers used it and then suffered seizures, racing heartbeat, severe body rashes and high blood pressure. Although the bottles listed a variety of herbal ingredients, FDA’s analysis uncovered two drugs, diphenhydramine and dextromethorphan, ingredients often used separately in over-the-counter cold medicines. FDA then analyzed other products sold by the same company, and announced that investigators had found additional chemicals: the drug ephedrine and the controlled substances GHB, also known as the date-rape drug, and a GHB derivative called GBL. Those two chemicals can cause life-threatening reactions. [View Article](#)

## First Bloodless HIV Test Approved in US

07 April – VOA News reported testing populations for [HIV](#) is a key to slowing the spread of the virus, and there is good news on that front. The FDA has approved the first bloodless rapid HIV test. Experts say it will make getting tested for the virus that causes AIDS easier and safer. The old version required a needle stick to draw a drop of blood. The new version only needs a swab of the test taker's gums. The test still takes only 20 minutes to get results that are more than 99 percent accurate. A second test is required to confirm a positive result. The CDC estimates that at least one quarter of

Americans who are HIV positive don't know their status. Experts say easier HIV tests can bring that figure down. [View Article](#)

## Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome: Montana

08 April – Infectious Disease News Brief reported the deputy superintendent at Glacier National Park died 25 March 2004 of [hantavirus pulmonary syndrome](#) in what was the first reported case of the disease this year. A male, age 61, became ill with flu-like symptoms in mid-March. Blood tests confirming the diagnosis were not completed until after his death. This was the 223rd case of hantavirus reported in Montana since the disease was first discovered in the state in 1993. He was the sixth Montanan to die of the disease. There have been two previous deaths in Cascade County and one each in Glacier, Phillips, and Lewis and Clark counties. The average age of the victims was 36. Officials with the Flathead City-County Health Department are still investigating how he contracted the disease, which occurs most frequently in the spring. [View Article](#)

## Leptospirosis Blamed in Student's Death

11 April – ProMED reported laboratory tests concluded that [leptospirosis](#) -- and not dengue fever -- caused the death on 26 Jan 2004 of a college student who vacationed on the Big Island of Hawaii, state officials said. The tests, performed by the CDC, also reveal that 22-year-old man had dengue antibodies in his system. State chief epidemiologist Paul Effler said the CDC tests showed that the student was indeed exposed to dengue before his death, a finding that has kept officials alert to the possibility that the virus is present on the island of Hawaii. Preliminary tests released earlier in 2004 said dengue likely killed the student, who died in Maryland, where he attended Washington College. In response to the results, the Health Department asked Big Island doctors to look out for residents with symptoms of the virus and report any cases. No one has been diagnosed with dengue in the months before the death or since. [View Article](#)

## Missed Alcohol Diagnoses in Hospital Patients

12 April - Eurekalert reported that many people admitted to hospitals in the U.S. have [alcohol use disorders](#) that go undetected, according to new study by scientists at the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA). The finding underscores a need to screen hospital patients for alcohol problems and refer patients for further evaluation, intervention, and treatment as needed. The new research builds on a study concluded last year by NIAAA in which the researchers surveyed data from more than 2,000 people who participated in the 1994 National Hospital Prevalence Study, which assessed alcohol use disorders among adults admitted to general hospitals in the United States. Upon admission to hospital, National Hospital Prevalence Study participants underwent a diagnostic interview to identify current alcohol use disorders. In this study, the researchers analyzed hospital record data for the same sample of admissions, this time to estimate rates of alcohol use disorders detection among patients whose diagnostic interviews indicated the presence of alcohol use disorders. Researchers found that alcohol diagnoses were reflected in the hospital records of fewer than half of those who evidenced an alcohol use disorder in their interview. They are concerned about the low detection rates, but also that only half of those detected had documentation of alcohol intervention or treatment referral. [View Source](#)

## Ohio Has First 2004 U.S. West Nile Case -Report

13 April – Reuters reported the first likely case of human [West Nile infection](#) in 2004 was reported in Ohio, health officials said. The Ohio Department of Health said a 79-year-old man was believed to be infected with the virus, which first appeared in the United States in 1999 and which has spread coast

to coast and to Canada and Mexico. "Today's development should remind us all of the importance of taking personal protection measures and working to eliminate mosquito breeding sites on and around our properties," Dr. Nick Baird of the Ohio Department of Health said in a statement. Last year the CDC reported 9,858 West Nile cases, with 262 deaths in 45 states and the District of Columbia. [View Article](#)

## Returning GIs Tested for Uranium Exposure

05 April – CNN News reported the U.S. Army is conducting medical tests on a handful of GIs who complained of illnesses after reported exposure to [depleted uranium](#) in Iraq. Up to six soldiers from a National Guard unit based in Orangeburg, New York, have undergone exams at Fort Dix, and three of them remain there under observation. The soldiers complained of headaches, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, joint pain and unusually frequent urination. The exposures apparently occurred last summer when the 442nd Military Police Co. served in Samawah, Iraq. Most members of the unit, which includes many New York police officers, firefighters and prison guards, remain in Iraq. Military medical officials from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and the Army's Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine conducted testing at Fort Dix. The Army would not identify the soldiers or say whether testing revealed contamination or illness. [View Article](#)

## Study: Many Can't Read the Label

08 April – CBS News reported nearly half of American adults face higher risks of health problems because of trouble understanding medical terms and directions, experts said in a report that calls for a national effort to improve health literacy. Comprehending medicine's arcane jargon is difficult for even the most educated of laymen. It's almost impossible for millions who can't read well, aren't fluent in English, or have vision or cognitive problems caused by aging. Now the Institute of Medicine has put a number on just how many people have "limited health literacy" — a surprising 90 million adults. They have problems following instructions on drug labels, interpreting hospital consent forms, even understanding a doctor's diagnosis and instructions. It's a problem exacerbated by the increasing complexity of the nation's health care system — one contributing to health disparities among the poor and minorities — and it may be causing billions of dollars in avoidable costs, the report concludes. Shame and stigma play a big role, the report found. Patients are embarrassed about reading difficulty or worried the doctor will think they're dumb if they ask questions. [View Article](#)

## Updated Primer on Foodborne Illness Released

7 April - CIDRAP News reported that an updated [foodborne illness](#) guide for physicians and nurses was written with an emphasis on "living in the post 9-11 environment," the FDA said in announcing the book's release today. The guide contains new sections on antibiotic-resistant *Salmonella*, toxoplasmosis, hepatitis A, norovirus, and intentional contamination, according to the American Medical Association (AMA), which helped prepare the book. Titled *Diagnosis and Management of Foodborne Illnesses: A Primer for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals*, the guide is free to healthcare workers. The FDA said three pathogens—*Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and *Toxoplasma*—cause more than 75% of fatal cases of foodborne illness. In addition to the five new sections, the new primer has an updated section on *Listeria*. Paper copies of the guide can be obtained free through an [AMA Web site](#). The material can also be downloaded from the same AMA site. [View Article](#)

## U.S. Passenger Jets Must Carry Defibrillators

3 April – HealthDay reported that U.S. airlines must now carry defibrillators that can help people who suffer a [heart attack](#). The rule, issued by the Federal Aviation Administration and mandated by

Congress, applies to U.S. airlines' domestic and international flights, according to *CNN*. Defibrillators provide an electric shock to the heart. This helps reestablish normal contraction rhythms in a heart with dangerous arrhythmia or in cardiac arrest. In the most common form of cardiac arrest, chances of survival can be as high as 90 percent if defibrillation is provided during the first few minutes, according to the news agency. The American Heart Association recommends that defibrillators should be available wherever large numbers of people gather. Such places include convention centers, sports stadiums and arenas, high-rise offices, and large health fitness facilities, to name a few. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### AIDS Out Of Control in India

11 April – CBS News reported [AIDS](#) is out of control in Africa but by some estimates, the most AIDS-infected country is India. According to a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) report, if the epidemic isn't contained soon, it could weaken India's army, and damage India's economy, which is closely tied to the US economy. It could lead to a new epidemic of the virus back in the United States. Nobody is more aware of what AIDS could do than Colin Powell, as he told the UN, "AIDS is more devastating than any terrorist attack, any conflict or any weapon of mass destruction. AIDS can destroy countries and destabilize entire regions." One of those regions is Africa, where in some places, 1 in 4 soldiers is infected with HIV -- putting the very stability of the continent at stake. The CIA says India could be next -- a nuclear power and a key ally in the war on terror in a part of the world where al Qaeda has a strong foothold. That's one reason CIA director George Tenet has taken notice of the AIDS epidemic. "The national security dimension of the virus is plain," says Tenet. "It can diminish military preparedness and further weaken beleaguered states." That hasn't happened yet in India, but it could if the epidemic spreads any further. Experts say India is close to the tipping point -- after that, the virus will have spread too far to be contained. [View Article](#)

### China Offers Free AIDS Tests, Treatment

14 April – The *AP* reported that China has begun offering free AIDS tests to anyone who wants one and free treatment for infected people who can't afford it, amid growing official urgency about stopping the spread of the virus. China says 840,000 of its people are HIV-positive and 80,000 have full-blown AIDS. But the UN AIDS agency says the number of infected people in China could rise to 10 million by 2020 without more aggressive prevention efforts. The plan for free AIDS testing was reported by state media, while the Health Ministry announced plans for free medication and treatment on its Web site. After years of denying that AIDS was a problem and harassing activists who agitated for better treatment, Beijing has launched efforts to stem the spread of the virus and improve treatment. The AIDS virus is believed to spread in China mostly through prostitution and intravenous drug use, but officials worry the disease could spread to the general population. Until recently, AIDS tests were available only in centers that treated sex workers and drug addicts, but health officials now encourage them for pregnant women and other members of the public. [View Article](#)

### Indonesia's Dengue Outbreak 'Far from Over'

13 April – Radio Australia reported Indonesia's Health Ministry has warned the country's widespread [dengue fever](#) outbreak is far from over. The outbreak has killed 634 people in Indonesia so far this year. The ministry says the number of infections, at 54,176, is greater than for the whole of last year, when Indonesia recorded almost 53,000 infections and 792 deaths. A ministry spokeswoman says the outbreak is expected to continue until the rainy season ends in May. However, she has conceded the

outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease has peaked and the number of new infections is declining. [View Article](#)

## Shanghai backs off from one-child policy

14 April – Yahoo News reported that China's largest city, Shanghai, is to ease controversial one-child policy laws this week to allow more couples a second offspring, reflecting growing concerns about a rapidly aging population. Municipal regulations say that couples in certain categories can have a second child without having to pay fines that run to three times average per capita annual earnings of about 60,000 yuan (\$7,250). While the decision may seem strange in an overcrowded city of nearly 17 million people officials, 11 years of negative population growth has authorities worried. They are concerned that the rising number of retirees will put pressure on the younger generation of taxpayers, further straining an already woefully underfunded social security system. China's family planning laws have consistently generated criticism from international rights groups who maintain that the right to bear children is fundamental to every human being. [View Source](#)

## Thailand Delays Declaring Victory over Bird Flu

09 April – Reuters reported Thailand backed away from declaring victory over bird flu, saying it need until April 27 to ensure the deadly virus was fully under control. The Agriculture Ministry had planned to announce the [avian flu](#) epidemic was finally over after it killed eight people and forced the culling of about 35 million chickens. Vietnam declared on March 30 that it had stamped out the avian flu, which killed 16 people in that country. Minister Newin told reporters Thai health officials would observe chickens in southeast Chonburi and northeast Khon Kaen provinces for another 20 days to ensure no new bird flu cases emerged. He said the two areas were the last of 41 previously infected Thai provinces which still could not be certified as free of the disease. [View Article](#)

# USSOUTHCOM

## Hospitals Provide No Refuge from Armed Attacks in Haiti

13 April – The Star Ledger reported hospital security is the biggest challenge for the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) in Haiti, where patients have been shot or dragged away by armed gangs during and after the rebellion that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February. The Geneva-based ICRC has spent thousands of dollars upgrading security at hospitals here in the capital and the northern city of Gonaives. The group also is advising smaller hospitals around the country on how to better protect their facilities. In the violent rebellion surrounding Aristide's ouster, hundreds of wounded Haitians were brought to hospitals. But all too often, the fighting between Aristide opponents and supporters continued inside hospital halls. Gun-toting gangs roamed the wards, looking to finish off wounded enemies. Josette Bijoux, Haiti's interim health minister, said in a radio interview that she had asked the multinational force to increase hospital patrols. No hospital attacks have been reported the past two weeks because of the improved security, but there is a fear of what lies ahead when foreign troops leave. [View Article](#)

## Sylvan Yellow Fever: Brazil

09 April – ProMED reported a second fatal case of sylvan yellow fever in Brazil in March 2004 has been confirmed in Iranduba, Amazonas state. The first was also in March, also fatal, in Paraopebas, Para state. One was a male, aged 36 and the other a female, aged 4 years. The term "sylvan" is applied to cases of yellow fever transmitted by forest mosquitoes in South America, as distinct from

urban yellow fever transmitted by *Aedes aegypti*. The case in Para reported by the media in January 2004 has not been confirmed. [View Article](#)

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiupdate/>.

POC: Lorraine Bell, DrPH, MSN  
[Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil](mailto:Lorraine.Bell@APG.amedd.army.mil)

Eileen Resta  
[eileen.resta@amedd.army.mil](mailto:eileen.resta@amedd.army.mil)

Approved:

[Kevin Delaney](#)

Chief, Health Information Operations  
(410) 436-5217 or DSN 584-5217